

3505  
19 G5  
16  
py 1

*The  
Gilding-Star  
And Other Poems*



*By*  
Stephen Chalmers



lc

ADIRONDACK EDITION







SARANAC LAKE NEWS PRINT  
Cover design by Harvey W. Lord  
Copyright 1916 by Stephen Chalmers



DEC -1 1916

*The*  
*Gilding-Star*  
*And Other Poems*



*By*  
Stephen Chalmers  
"

PS 3505  
H19G5  
1916

\$0.50

©Cl.A 447626

no 1.

### TO ONE

Upon whose brow there is a gentle grace,  
And in her hair a crown few queens have worn;  
For she has suffered with a quiet face,  
And for the rose's sake revered the thorn.



## IDEALS

*Children, O my children!*

*When the ship comes home,  
I will deck you to my pleasure  
With my riches and my leisure,  
And then and forever  
We will roam.*

*Children, O my children!*

*When the ship comes home,  
And no longer we are sighing  
O'er this weary ever-trying  
'Gainst the sea and the breakers  
Stinging foam,*

*Then, children, O my children!*

*Though the tide sets strong,  
Though our eyes are growing heavy  
And the time seems long,  
We'll forget our yester-sorrow  
In our planning for the morrow,  
And cheer us in our waiting  
With a song!*

## NOTE

Some of these verses were written at sea, some on top of a New York skyscraper, others on the long trail by palm and pine. Many of them blossomed on that fruitful tree which grows in the "southeast corner" of The New York Times; others are leaves from yesterday's magazines; and not a few were first printed in a North Woods newspaper which now offers them in this form to meet an apparent demand. If here and there they reflect the alternating pessimism and optimism of one handicapped by conditions, they may yet meet similar moods in others and bring to them a little of the light of fellow feeling in the dark hours of the Long Day.

—S. C.

---

## CONTENTS

---

The Gilding-Star  
A Truth  
The Toilers  
Lines to a Pilgrim  
The Singer in the Ditch  
The Roses  
Rebellion  
A Wish  
She .  
Tempus Fugit  
The Red Cross Nurse  
Snow  
Little Bo-Peep  
Travel Tales  
The Singer and His Song  
After-thoughts  
The Plea of the Absent  
Adirondack Sunset  
The Voice of the City  
The Temple of the Woods  
Resurrection  
Fame  
Disillusion  
Love at Sea  
The Star-Gazer  
Zero  
Home



---

## THE GILDING-STAR

---



HERE is a sea—a quiet sea,  
Beyond the farthest line,  
Where all my ships that went astray  
Where all my dreams of yesterday,  
And all the things that were to be,  
Are mine!

There is a land—a quiet land,  
Beyond the setting sun,  
Where every task in which I failed,  
And all wherein my courage quailed,  
Where all the good my spirit planned,  
Is done!

There is a hope—a quiet hope,  
Within my heart instilled,  
That if, undaunted, on I sail,  
This gilding-star shall never pale,  
But shine upon my labor's scope,  
Full filled!

And there's a tide—a quiet tide,  
Flowing toward the goal—  
That sweeps by every human shore  
And at its fullest ebbs no more;  
And on that final swell shall ride  
My soul!

---

## A T R U T H

---

**D**ID you hate old Winter's croak,  
How could you love the Summer so?  
Did you not reel beneath the yoke,  
How very tiring rest would grow.

If all the pains of earth were dead,  
Joy would entail its own defeat,  
If death were robbed of all its dread,  
Life would be robbed of all its sweet.

Thank God for everything in Life!  
The big and little, sweet and sour.  
Peace is the child of stirring strife,  
And pain the mother of all power!

---

## THE TOILERS

---

**D**REAMS—dreams—dreams!  
Of all the things that we yet  
may do,  
But the present pain seems an endless chain.  
Real and true!

And some of us dream of temples,  
While the roof sags overhead,  
And some of the gold that a witch foretold,  
While we fight for bread.

Dreams—vain dreams!  
Of the things that we yet may be;  
Yet the worst and best have gone to rest,  
And so shall we.

And some of us dream of glory,  
While the sword hangs by a thread;  
Of a little fame, a remembered name  
When we are—dead!

And none has returned to tell us  
If dreams may alter Fate;  
Yet we toil and try, bequeath and die.  
The rest—can wait!

---

## LINES TO A PILGRIM

---



WHO goes his Way in puny Wrath,  
His back toward the Sun,  
Shall find a shadow on his Path.  
His own, till Day is done.

Who, turning, walks toward the Light,  
Shall bid that Shade depart;  
Shall find the Road to Mecca bright,  
The Sunshine on his heart!

What though the shadow follow still?  
Turn not thine Eye nor Mind.  
Thou art the Master. At thy Will,  
It must—shall!—walk behind!

---

## THE SINGER IN THE DITCH

---



HEY say all men are equal born,

But to the strong's the race.

Lo, white beneath this wayside thorn.

Behold thy brother's face!

For some are born of sturdy strain,

Some of a broken reed;

Yet they who, blameless, suffer pain,

Have ten times greater need.

And he whom Virtue hails at length

Is kin through what he hides;

For every man who hath great strength

A weakness hath besides.

Brother, when we two played the game,

Ere my foot struck yon stone,

We knew each other's Christian name.

Now I know not mine own.

Contemn me not that I am poor,

And let me not hate thee.

Thou art my brother as of yore.

Brother, dost thou know me?

---

## THE ROSES\*

---

**P**RISCILLA sent me roses,  
Roses white and red.  
Brought they roses to me,  
And laid them on my bed.

Her name is not Priscilla,  
Nor meant for me her posies;  
But let it be!  
It pleases me.  
So, pray you, for the time agree—  
Priscilla sent me roses!

But why call her Priscilla,  
Whom I have never known?  
Ah! you would have me whisper  
A secret all mine own.

But once I saw her walking  
And gathering such roses—  
A Mayflower lass  
Who, in her glass,  
For sweet Priscilla well might pass,  
To whom poor John proposes.

Priscilla sent me roses.  
Their cheeks were pink and fair,  
And o'er them, drooping gently,  
Hung sweetest maiden-hair.

---

\*A certain lady sent roses to a friend. By mistake, they were delivered to one who, ill at the time, now and thus acknowledges a pardonable theft

---

## THE ROSES

---

Her name is not Priscilla.

Nor meant for me her posies :

But have your will,

I'll swear so still!

And, spite of all, I'll drink my fill

Of beauty from her roses!

---

## REBELLION

---



O wake at morn,  
And hear the little laugh  
Of the lake-wind in the trees;

To watch at dawn  
The earliest sunbeam kiss  
The mist-crowned, towering peaks  
And glide down to the plains.

Ah, that is Life!  
Not this—

To wake at morn,  
And hear the swelling roar  
Of Man, Beast and Machine,  
Toiling in murky air  
And a city's sweat!

At noon to dream  
Where Nature's bowers are hid  
Beneath an arch  
Of twined and intersticing vines.  
While on the air  
Quivers the chanting of the sighing woods.  
And the songs of mating birds.

Ah, that is Life!  
Not this—

At noon to pause,  
And lay aside the pen for one brief hour:  
Then to return, as I did yesterday,  
Will do tomorrow and on all tomorrows—  
Oh, Fool, Machine, and Slave!

---

## REBELLION

---

Again at dusk,  
To watch the sun's last ray  
Fade in the west;  
To feel Earth's grand transition  
From day to night—  
That moment when the world  
Pauses and knows itself!  
The Angelus chimes  
And echoes 'round the Earth:  
Here the Muezzin's call,  
There a child's lullaby,  
And now a poor serf's prayer. . . .  
Earth's evensong!

To hear that is to live!  
Not this—  
To breast the roaring surge  
Of thousands, pale and tired, dead in soul,  
Crowding with merciless haste toward  
home.  
Home? . . .  
Past ere the sweet of home has touched  
the sense!

To toil that we may sleep  
That better we may toil;  
To toil that we may eat,  
That better we may toil.  
Ay, that is Life; but still—  
But still we dream!

---

## A WISH

---



HAD I the voice I would sing,  
Had I the touch, I would play.  
And all this beautiful world would  
ring  
With music night and day!


Had I the gift, I would write;  
I would paint, had I the skill,  
An earth so fair and full of light  
That none should know its ill!


Still am I free to hear,  
Still am I free to see;  
And the cost of life is none too dear,  
For life is good to me!

---

## S H E

---

 AIR as a flow'r was she; for when she  
smiled.

 It was to me a gleam from some dap-  
pled pool,  
Tinting a primrose.

Fairer than night was she; for when her  
eyes

Arose to mine, their modesty rebuked  
The Summer stars.

And O, as the dawn was she; for when she  
came

Over the heath at daybreak, envious Night,  
Drawing her mantle, fled, leaving a trail  
Of tears upon the grass.

---

## TEMPUS FUGIT

---



O! the gray gossamer of the years  
Silters the days.

And Time, that hoary spider of our  
fears,

Spins always. . .

Silent, unseen, save when we lift our eyes  
Up from the living page of smiles and sighs.

And gaze

Where the gray gossamer of the years  
Fills the house corners. And remembering  
tears

Deepen the haze.

---

## THE RED CROSS NURSE

---



AR, gray eyes that take light from  
the sea,

Up in the north where the dusk is  
long;

Quiet, gray eyes that look out beyond me—  
Tender and wistful, calm and strong.

Brave little smile, like a sun-ray shot  
Down through the dark of a Wintry  
hour;

Sad little smile—afterglow of some thought  
Sealed in a book with a broken flow'r!

Womanly heart that to read must this:  
Self and its serfs rebuke, contempt!  
Little white hands that a man might kiss,  
Himself honoring more than them.

---

## S N O W

---



ROTH on the sea.

Mist on the lea.

White on the hill,

Clear-cut and still.

Frost on the sedge.

Drifts on the ledge.

Prismatic beams where the window-pane  
gleams,

And silence!

Foam that flies,

Flutters and dies

Softly to sleep,

Or, as the winds sweep,

Whirls in mad races, and traces its graces

With fantasy's ease on the stiff, bare trees,

In silence!

Voices so clear ;

Whispers so near ;

Shadows appear.

And go,

Out of the night.

Into the light--

Into the bright and shimmering white

Of the snow.

Hurrying--gray--passing away.

In silence!

---

## LITTLE BO-PEEP

---



LITTLE Bo-Peep

Has gone to sleep,

And left the world behind her:

Left mother alone

With a heart of stone,

And a three-legged sheep to remind her—

That little Bo-Peep

Has gone to sleep,

And left the world behind her.

To little Bo-Peep,

Who has gone to sleep,

The world was of play and laughter:

For little she knew,

As some of us do,

Of the pain and the tears that come after.

So why should we weep

For little Bo-Peep?

And mother's own grief should remind her.

That curly-haired tot

Is spared quite a lot;

And Some Day or Other she'll find her—

That little Bo-Peep,


Who went to sleep,

And left the world behind her.

---

## TRAVEL TALES

---

 HERE is a field where daisies grow,  
Where simple rivers seaward flow,  
With blue above and green below,  
Just children wander there.

There is a garden full of flow'rs,  
And butterflies and golden hours,  
Where pleasure tends the day-dream  
bow'rs,  
Daughters of Eve walk there.

There is a path where night-flow'rs bloom,  
Where glow-worms chase the pressing  
gloom.  
Where Life's the bride and Youth's the  
groom.  
The sons of men walk there.

There is a place where skies rain tears,  
Where gaunt trees rise and shadowy fears,  
Where every footstep galls and sears.  
Only the fool comes there.

There is a road where Autumn reigns,  
Where leaves are sere and strew the plains,  
Where Summer yields to Winter's pains.  
Even the wise come there.

But there's the field where daisies grow,  
Where simple rivers seaward flow,  
With blue above and green below.  
Come! Let us wander there!

---

## THE SINGER AND HIS SONG

---



Of what avail to sing of Death?  
None but the dead will hear.  
Of what avail to sing of Life?  
The living lend no ear.

Of what avail to sing of Love?  
Only the jealous care.  
Of what avail to sing of Hate?  
Love will not turn a hair.

Of what avail to sing of Truth?  
Truth from old age is cold.  
Of what avail to sing of Faith?  
Do beggars scatter gold?

Of what avail to sing at all?  
The nightingale replies:  
"I sing to cheer a heavy heart,  
And stay the light that flies!"

---

## AFTER-THOUGHTS

---



ASTE life discreetly. Tempt still the mind.

Drain to the dregs, and—dregs you will find.

Pry not too closely. Tender's the veil,  
Truth is beneath it, sneering and pale.

Mock not the simple fool's paradise.  
Happier he than woefully wise.

### II

Who tells you Love is sped,  
Sighs.

Who tells you Faith is fled,  
Lies.

Who tells you Hope is dead,  
Dies!

### III

Ask the old, but not the young:

Would I live again my life—

'All its calm and all its strife?

Answer would the sagest tongue:  
No!

Save, perhaps, some wrong to right:

But to have done otherwise,

To have seen with other eyes,

So to change my present plight?

No!

---

## AFTER-THOUGHTS

---

As the traveler turns to home,  
Should he go that way or this?  
Neither can lead far amiss.  
"All roads lead to Rome!"

---

## THE PLEA OF THE ABSENT

---



YOU spoke of her to me?

Did a faint smile

Tremble upon her lips?

How did it seem to be?

Did she a moment's while,

As one who sees far ships,

Look past you? Did her eyes

Not light a little? Or the sea

Of her blue vision dim as in a haze

Of lingering gaze?

A tide of color rise,

Or ebb . . . at word of me?

She spoke to you of me?

What did she say?

Did her tongue move in doubt,

Or speak in difficulty?

Or in a hurried way,

Fearing a secret out?

And did she speak my name,

Or sudden change the theme?

Her manner did seem free,

Treating of This and That and Me the  
same?

Tell me . . . how did it seem,

Then . . . when she spoke of me?

---

## AN ADIRONDACK SUNSET

---



TURQUOISE and gold, a crimson wave  
between;

A great star bosom'd in the loftier  
blue;

A vague mirage of dusk isles' deepening  
green,

With inshore waters of a ghostly hue.

A sea of frozen flame and molten ice!

As if the north's white leagues, the boreal  
lights,

The Orient's blaze, the color-sense of spice,

Were gathered by the gods into the  
heights.

Or as if spirit hands, that in the dawn

Stir delicate fires from out the ash of  
Night,


Swept up the leaves of Day from Heaven's  
lawn,

And burned a splendid Sacrifice of Light!

---

## THE VOICE OF THE CITY

---

OMES a tone that sounds alone,  
Rising from the city to the snows;  
Strumming, drumming, humming like  
a zephyr in a lyre,  
Murmuring and purring like a great un-  
hindered fire  
That has struck a mighty measure in the  
burning of its treasure,  
Without thought of pain or pity as it  
glows!

Soft and slow and vast and low,  
Swelling from a whisper, as the veering  
wind may lift  
All the thunder of a torrent in some raving,  
rocky rift,  
From a shiver of the river to a groan madly  
blown  
To a roar!  
That, dying, fills the cars with the fears  
and the tears  
That one hears within a shell  
On the shore!

---

## THE TEMPLE OF THE WOODS

---



Why do the wild flowers spread  
Their fairest where few tread?  
Why do the wild birds sing  
Only where echoes ring?  
Careless of what men hear or see,  
Careless of where or what men be,  
Does God walk there?

The leaves stir, yet no breeze  
Moves in the dim-lit trees.  
The carpet of the glades  
Trembles in gliding shades.  
The birds uplift a choir of song.  
The praying forest whispers long.  
Does God walk there?

---

## RESURRECTION

---



HE air is still.

The edge of Winter's blade

Is turned by long, hard use.

The brown earth, fallowed rich,  
Breaks through the melting snows.

The mountain stream

Chants a high anthem from a bubbling  
heart.

The gray-haired skies

Regain the smooth-browed calm

Of blue-eyed youth.

The trees, still bare,

Yet breathe maternal mystery,

And whisper to the eager-asking birds

A secret prescience. And but last night

A cricket stirred,

And shrilled its bell-like song across the  
world.

Now Flora walks abroad,

Her fertile tread

Leaving a magic imprint on the mould;

And who have eyes

May see her as she passes o'er the grass.

Her breath is balm,

Her gaze compassionate warmth;

Her finger-tips drip myrrh,

And everything that senses her approach

Thrills with the joy of resurrected hope.

---

## RESURRECTION

---

It is the birthday of the world.  
Old earth,  
So long despairing, wakes from lethargy.  
Renewing faith the cynic, Winter, jeered.  
Life is Immortal!

---

## F A M E

---

**B**ELOVED of all the earth, woo'd of all  
men,  
She smiles and frowns, favors and  
spurns again.

Mistress of wide-eyed nights, or visions  
fair;

Maid-o'-the-Mist upon the marsh of care:  
Fame—so like a woman!

I send her all the fatness of my lands:  
I send her all the labors of my hands;  
And all my pride of youth before her lay.  
She curtseys low, but then—she turns  
away.

Fame—so like a woman!

I rose up with the sun and wove a chain  
Of blossoms, jewel'd with the leaf-born  
rain.

She paid no heed to me or mine, the while  
She smiled on one who had not sought her  
smile.

Fame—so like a woman!

He came. He conquered! For he met her  
eyes

With no abasement—nay, nor pleading  
sighs.

Defiantly, despite her frown, he stood.  
Strange, but she fell to loving in that mood.

Fame—so like a woman!

---

## DISILLUSION

---

**A**S Summer's breath each year begins  
to blow,  
We dream again of all the sweetest  
things  
That charmed our Youth in seeming  
fairer Springs,  
Long years ago.  
And hearts rebel, and blood yearns for the  
thrill  
That never seems the same before and  
after,  
A new strange note is in the lark's first  
trill,  
And into sobbing changed the snow-  
flood's laughter.  
Or are we changed? And is the coin's false  
ring  
In visiting the scenes we loved awhile—  
Where it seemed Life was always at the  
Spring—  
Only a stern reminder of the mile  
That we have traveled since those happy  
days,  
When hearts were young and drinking  
Summer's breath?  
It must be so. Then let us go our ways,  
And leave Regret to lull itself to Death.

---

## LOVE AT SEA

---



ING low,  
As the winds blow,  
And the breasting petrels fly.  
Waves grow,  
And sails flow,  
And living lights the eye.  
Life is short, but the day is long,  
And in our hearts is the wonder-song.

Your rare,  
Brown-gold hair  
Blows across my face.  
Hearts leap  
And eyelids steep.  
Ah! Love has won the race.  
Life is short, but the hour is long,  
And in our hearts is the wonder-song.

Sun low,  
And seas slow,  
And idle wings unfurled.  
Lights swung  
And stars hung,  
And a calm upon the world.  
Life is short, but the night is long,  
And in our hearts is the wonder-song!

---

## THE STAR-GAZER

---



O sage in learning, I;  
Yet in the night,  
When earth is dark, save twinkling  
lights afar,  
That mark the town asleep,  
From out the blankness of forgotten self  
A shadowy being steals,  
And the mind reels among the swaying  
stars!

Then from this speck of star-dust hung  
athwart  
The great, incomprehensible abyss—  
Where th' alternate seasons move like  
ghosts  
Between the spheres,  
The far-flung being of the mind drifts on,  
Asking of worlds the secret of it all!

And evermore they point  
On!—on through ordered chaos, where the  
calm,  
The mighty, breathing calm,  
Seems like the desert, full of whisperings!  
Infinity! And then?—Infinity!  
Where the mind reels among the swaying  
stars,  
And sinks to earth and this clay-fettered  
shell,  
Baffled and impotent!

---

## ZERO

---



RIDES he like a rigid corse,  
Upright on a pallid horse.

In his eyes a boreal gleam

Slumbers like a frozen dream.

On his brow a jewel glows,

Scintillating like the snows,

Where some moon-ray, over-bold,

Falls in crystals, stricken cold.

Comes he from the phantom north,

Where his palace walls give forth

Rays of iridescent light

To the clear and lip-sealed night;

Where the still stars watch him ride

Forth to his unwilling bride—

Warmth that his own presence chills;

Love that his embracing kills.

Ere that glittering hall he leaves.

Out a courier rides and weaves

(That we may not see him pass)

Charms upon the window glass;

For to see his face is death,

Or to feel his icy breath;

And these frozen boreal eyes

Can the warm blood paralyze!

---

## ZERO

---

So he rides, a mist-veiled corse,  
Upright on a pallid horse,  
While the moon's rim on the hill  
Seems there welded stark and still;  
While th' ascending smoke of fires  
Lifts to Heav'n inverted spires.  
Snapping pine and whining fir  
Groan of senseless things astir—  
Shuddering rock and cracking wall,  
Strangling stream and choking fall—  
Earth inanimate's deep cry:  
Zero, King, is passing by!

---

## HOME

---



HEREVER smoke wreaths

Heavenward curl—

Cave of a hermit,

Hovel of churl,

Mansion of merchant, princely dome—

Out of the dreariness,

Into its cheeriness,

Come we in weariness,

Home.

I, too, have wandered

Through the far lands.

Home there was their home:

Open their hands.

Yet though all brothers, born of the foam,

Far o'er appalling sea,

Ever enthralling me,

Blood still was calling me

Home!

Men speak of jewels

Earth hold abroad.

What can compare with

One bit of sod,

Full of the love-gold sunk in the loam?

Where lies my holy dead,

There where my mother shed

Tears o'er my sleeping head—

Home!

---

## HOME

---

Home, where I first knew  
Day was alight,  
Where I would fain be  
Ere the Long Night,  
That they might write this in some old  
tome:  
This earth the womb was;  
This earth the room was;  
This earth the tomb was —  
Home!







0 015 863 928 2